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Academy of Language Studies
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Table of contents



<u>From the Editorial Team</u>	3
<u>Department News & Reports</u>	4
<u>Club News & Report</u>	27
<u>Self-Love First</u>	39
<u>Travelling</u>	46
<u>Home Garden</u>	58
<u>Teaching & Learning</u>	64
<u>Lecturer's Contribution</u>	68
<u>Creative Writing</u>	81
<u>The Team</u>	90

Sharing of Experience from a Collaborative Program Leader

By: Leow Min Hui

A collaborative program, the Chinese Character Writing Competition, was held from the 28th to the 30th of October, with the closing ceremony taking place on the 9th of November 2024. The program was initiated by the lecturers from the Academy of Language Studies (APB), Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang (UiTM CPP), in collaboration with Universiti Kuala Lumpur – Malaysian Spanish Institute (UniKL MSI). As the program leader, I, Dr. Leow Min Hui, have gained valuable experience from leading and conducting the program. Thus, the significant insights from the program are worth sharing.

Collaborative intent from the collaborator

Before organising a collaborative program, it is important to secure a formal intent from the collaborator to ensure clarity and mutual understanding. A letter of intent, printed on official letterhead, should be sent to the collaborator as an initial step. This letter serves as a formal declaration of the collaboration and outlines the key details of the proposed program. Following this, a meeting should be conducted to finalise the paperwork, with a focus on important aspects such as the date, time, location, activities, and budget. This process ensures that all parties are aligned and well-prepared for the collaboration.



As it is called a collaborative program, it is essential that the committee members involved include lecturers from both universities to ensure balanced representation and shared responsibility. Appointment letters should be issued to each committee member to formally acknowledge their participation and reinforce the spirit of collaboration. The budget is a sensitive matter that requires thorough and careful discussion between both parties to ensure equitable contribution and financial transparency, fostering a strong foundation for the success of the program.

Strive to achieve the University's Performance Indicator (PI)

First of all, it is crucial for lecturers to take note of and actively strive to achieve the university's performance indicators (PI), as these benchmarks reflect the institution's goals for academic excellence, research output, and overall contribution to society. Meeting these indicators is not only a responsibility but also a key factor in personal and professional growth, aligning individual efforts with the broader objectives of the university, and ultimately enhancing the quality of education and reputation of the institution. For instance, the following factors implied in the Chinese Character Writing Competition were deemed to be following the university's PI:

- Enhancing communication skills
- Fostering creativity through Chinese characters writing
- Requiring participants to write characters that reflect the ESI-iDART theme and promote well-being
- Emphasise knowledge transfer
- Efficient budget management (internal and external funds)

Meeting, reporting, and updating

Regular meetings provide a platform for all parties to discuss progress, address any challenges, and make necessary adjustments. Reporting keeps everyone informed about the status and ensures transparency in the collaboration. Consistent updates help track milestones, ensuring that the program stays on schedule and that the goals of the collaboration are being met effectively. These practices are essential for maintaining clear communication, fostering trust, and ensuring that the collaboration remains on track toward achieving its objectives. Program leaders should ensure that all committee members have the opportunity to contribute their perspectives. A good leader should be able to gather diverse inputs and encourage active engagement from all committee members.

Success in a collaborative program depends on the leader's crucial role, but the collective effort of all committee members ultimately drives it forward. The leader provides guidance and oversight, but the contributions, expertise, and dedication of each member are essential to achieving the program's objectives. Effective collaboration hinges on the active participation and cooperation of every team member, ensuring that diverse perspectives and skills are harnessed to overcome challenges and achieve shared goals.